Increasing the wheat production

615. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to fill up the existing gap of 1.5 to two tonnes per hectare in wheat production;

(b) if so, whether Government have decided to empower "the extension functionaries,with the latest knowledge in crop husbandry and by making inputs available, it would be possible to bridge this yield gap;

(c) whether Government are giving encouragement to researchers to ensure that future wheat varieties, apart from being high yielding should also have acceptable quality for end-use product development; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to improve the wheat output?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YApAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Latest production technologies evolved by ICAR/SAUs are being demonstrated among the farmers for their adoption so as to bridge up the gap between potential created and potential realised. Front Line Demonstrations are also being organized by the research scientists, KVKs besides, production technologies, demonstrations being organized by the State Governments through crop development programmes.

(b) Research and Development interfaces are being organized on pre-seasonal basis, keeping in view the dissemination of latest production technologies, so as to impart the latest knowledge to the field functionaries in crop husbandry. Zonal conferences on inputs followed by National Conferences on Agriculture for Kharif and Rabi Campaigns are being organized by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation before Kharif and Rabi seasons in which production programme *vis-a-vis* input availability and schemes implementation are being reviewed with a view to supplement the efforts of State Governments.

(c) and (d) The Government of India through ICAR has been providing enough institutional support for the development of high yielding disease resistant varieties of wheat. Under the All India Coordinated Wheat Improvement Project nearly 40 wheat breeding centres covering almost all the wheat growing areas of the country are engaged in the wheat improvement work for the last 35 years. As a result of it, over 250 new wheat (T. aestivum, T.durum. T.dicoccum, Triticale) varieties have been developed and released in India till date. Due to high genetic yield potential and disease resistance of recently evolved new wheat varieties both total production as well as productivity of wheat has touched all time highest mark at national level. To energies and realise the potential of eastern and comparatively warmer parts of the country for further boosting the wheat production, a Mission Mode NATP Project on "Increasing Wheat Production and Building up Research Capabilities in the Warmer Areas and Eastern India" has been initiated by the Council. To accomplish this objective, the quality group of the Directorate has secured a NATP Project entitled "Quality Improvement of Bread and Durum Wheat" four centres namely, DWR (Lead Centre), Karnal, PAU, Ludhiana, GBPUA & T, Pant Nagar and RRS, IARI, Indore are already working to breed wheat varieties for chapatti, bread, biscuit and pasta products.

Drought assistance to A.P.

616. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased-to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has expressed unhappiness over Centre's lack of response to the drought situation in the State;

(b) whether inspite of the Central team's visit to the State, not even single rupee has been made available to drought affected areas;

(c) the recommendations made by the Central team; and

(d) the extent to which State Government was provided help and assistance and also to what extent "food for work" programme has been implemented in the State?